

# HOPE for drug abusers with mental illness

**HOPE, from A1**  
who have been diagnosed with both substance abuse and mental illness.

"To say that is innovative is an understatement," said Mark Luckner, the new executive director of the state's Community Health Resources Commission, which funds HOPE, who was visiting with county health officials on Jan. 25.

"The fact that the health department took it upon themselves to reach out to the detention center and target recidivizing individuals... and focus on the totality of their health care needs, that's very innovative," he said, noting he plans to encourage several other jurisdictions to implement programs similar to HOPE.

The initiative, which received about \$484,000 from the state for fiscal years 2008 through 2011, seeks to connect 600 dually-diagnosed inmates with a variety of services, including substance abuse counseling, psychiatric services and primary health care.

The program's counselors work with about 200 inmates.

"I think today we are in a better position to move this ahead," health department director Susan Kelly said. "We have the right people in the right positions. Everyone is very committed to it."

Luckner said he plans to develop a set of measures to study HOPE's effectiveness, including finding a way to collect outcome data.

"Rome wasn't built in a day," he said about developing those measures. But "I think the program appears to be working very, very well and I think Harford County, Susan Kelly and her staff, Sheriff [Jesse] Bane, they are to be commended, and I plan to tout their program as I meet with more people."

Bane said while the program's success rate is unknown, it does target the high percentage of inmates who are both addicted to drugs or alcohol and are considered mentally ill.

"If it wasn't for those problems, they wouldn't be there," he said about the majority of inmates. "The detention center has become a homeless shelter, a treatment center, a mental health agency. If we are able to get those services that those people need, we are going to reduce the recidivism rate. We are going to see people whose lives become productive."

Bane supports HOPE because it is "the total picture," he said. "It's one of the best programs I have seen in a long time. They are offering the total package."

It has already produced success stories like that of former inmate James, who started with the program in June 2009, about a month after she came home from the detention center and women's prison.

Now 36, she has overcome many obstacles and is working to pass the General Educational Development test and make a better life for her three children.

"They don't treat us like a client

or a patient. They treat you like an actual human being," she said about the program's officials. "HOPE is a wonderful resource. It actually works."

The groups she attends and the counselors who lead them have also been "wonderful," James said.

While in prison, "I had already built in my mind that I was going to come home and do something very different with my life," she said.

At HOPE, "they teach you that you are valuable, that you do count, that you don't have to have a substance abuse problem for the rest of your life, and they give you the tools to operate," she said.

"If you have anything that you have an issue with, they effectively have a way to meet that problem," she said. "If you say, 'I'm so tired of living in the shelter,' if you come in, the counselors are, like, 'We will take care of that for you.' And they actually do."

# Harford students among the tops on AP exams

**AP, from A1**  
"college mastery level" on the AP exams, according to a press release from the Maryland State Board of Education.

Many higher education institutions award college credit for high school students scoring a three or better on the exams.

Harford County seniors exceeded the state's passing rate of a three or better on AP exams on 10 of the 17 exams offered to Harford County's Class of 2009.

Harford's seniors struggled compared to the state's rate for exams focused on foreign languages and history, with not much more than half of those who took the tests passing them.

Harford's seniors were extremely proficient, however, on Calculus BC, Computer Science, English Language and Composition, Physics BC and Statistics AP exams, with more than 75 percent of seniors who took those exams scoring a three or better.

Maryland also ranked first in the nation in the percentage of graduating seniors who had taken an AP exam.

The state became the first in history to have 40 percent of its seniors, or 23,293 students, take at least one AP test. Harford County had 1,253 seniors take at least one AP test in 2009, which is 23 more participants than 2008.

Consistently, Bel Air, C. Milton Wright, and Fallston high schools have accounted for about 60 percent of all AP test-takers in Harford County, according to the school system's Office of Accountability.

The AP exams that Harford County seniors exceeded the state percentage rate, by scoring a three or higher, include:

Biology: county - 54.7 percent; state - 52.6 percent.

Calculus AB: county - 65.4 percent; state - 64.1 percent.

Calculus BC: county - 85.9 percent; state - 78.6 percent.

Computer science A/B: county - 77.7 percent; state - 70.6 percent.

English language and composition: county - 83.4 percent; state - 63.5 percent.

English literature: county - 73.2 percent; state - 60.4 percent.

Environmental science: county - 57.3 percent; state - 49.6 percent.

Physics BC: county - 76.1 percent; state - 62.7 percent.

Psychology: county - 66.3 percent; state - 64.6 percent.

Statistics: county - 88.1 percent; state - 60.2 percent.

AP exams Harford County seniors fell short of the state rates for scoring a three or higher include:

Chemistry: county - 52.7 percent; state - 58.7.

German language: county - 15 percent; state - 56.2 percent.

Spanish language: county - 35 percent; state - 66.7 percent.

European history: county - 54.8 percent; state - 71.6 percent.

U.S. History: county - 53.7 percent;

state - 57.4 percent.

World History: county - 40 percent; state - 60.2 percent.

Seven Harford County students took the AP French Language exam, but none passed with a score of three or higher.

At the state level, 60.8 percent of students who took the AP French language exam passed.



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